

FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY PROGRAM

FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY PROGRAM ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE AND CRITERIA



**Federal Technical Capability Panel
and the
Office of Human Resources and Administration**

**U.S. Department of Energy
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INTRODUCTION

The Federal Technical Capability Program provides for the recruitment, deployment, development and retention of federal personnel with the demonstrated technical capability to safely accomplish the Department's missions and responsibilities. The Federal Technical Capability Panel (Panel) reports to the Deputy Secretary and oversees and resolves issues affecting the Federal Technical Capability Program. The Panel periodically assesses the effectiveness of the four functions of the Federal Technical Capability Program using both internal and independent experts.

This document establishes the guidance and criteria for conducting internal and independent Federal Technical Capability Assessments within the Department. The requirements of this document are applicable to those organizations having safety responsibilities for defense nuclear facilities. This includes both headquarters and field organizations. Regardless of the type of assessment conducted, the objectives and criteria within this document are used as a basis for the assessment. Use of consistent objectives and criteria is necessary to establish baselines and to track and trend performance.

This document is issued on an interim basis under the authority of the Federal Technical Capability Panel chartered by the Deputy Secretary of Energy. This interim issuance is to support the completion of Federal Technical Capability Assessments to meet commitments to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board. This document will be entered in the Department's Directives system with other Recommendation 93-3 Implementation Plan documents.

NOTE: Technical Qualification Program (TQP) Assessments, which support the overall assessment of Federal Technical Capability, are conducted in accordance with the Technical Qualification Program Assessment Guidance and Criteria issued separately.

S. D. Richardson /s/ 9/17/98

S.D. Richardson, Chair
Federal Technical Capability Panel

GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Types of Assessments

Within the context of this document, Federal Technical Capability Assessments are classified in four ways. They can be internal assessments, independent assessments, local assessments or Departmental assessments. Regardless of the type of assessment conducted, the objectives and criteria within this document should be used as a basis for the assessment. Using a consistent set of objectives and criteria is necessary to establish baselines and to track and trend performance.

Internal Federal Technical Capability Assessments are conducted using experts from within the Department of Energy (DOE). Although DOE may select independent experts from within the Department to participate in the assessment, internal assessments are typically conducted using personnel from within the organization or program being assessed. Internal assessments are led by a senior manager from within the Department.

Independent Federal Technical Capability Assessments are conducted using experts from outside the Department, or experts from within the Department that have no involvement with the organization or program being assessed. If external experts are used on the team, they may include independent consultants, personnel from other agencies or experts from industry organizations. The independent assessment team may be lead by an external expert or an independent DOE expert.

Local Federal Technical Capability Assessments are conducted within an individual office or organization of the Department of Energy. This includes field elements and Headquarters offices. Local assessments may be internal or independent assessments, however, typically they are internal assessments.

Departmental Federal Technical Capability Assessments are conducted across multiple offices of the Department of Energy and they may be internal or independent assessments. Departmental assessments may cover the entire Federal Technical Capability Program, or they may cover a single aspect of the program such as recruitment or the intern program.

Requirements for Conducting Federal Technical Capability Assessments

Internal Assessments

Each DOE office with safety responsibilities for defense nuclear facilities conducts a Local Federal Technical Capability Assessment covering all of the objectives and criteria in this document on a biennial basis. These assessments are conducted in the second quarter of the

calendar year, in the odd years (e.g., the first local assessments will be completed by June 1999). Conducting the assessments in the same time period allows the Panel to review and compare the results of all of the local assessments together. Local Federal Technical Capability Assessments should be led by a Senior Technical Safety Manager, who reports directly to the Office Manager for the purpose of the assessment.

The Panel reviews the results of all of the local assessments. Based upon the results of this review, the Panel may charter a Departmental assessment team to review the implementation of select objectives and criteria across the Department. Team leadership and membership is approved by the Federal Technical Capability Panel.

Independent Assessments

The Federal Technical Capability Panel charts Independent Federal Technical Capability Assessments when there is an indication that there is a potential performance problem in an area of the Federal Technical Capability Program, or there is a desire for an independent review of an organization or program. Independent assessments are conducted based upon the objectives and criteria in this document. Additional objectives and criteria may be added to the scope of the assessment by the Panel. The Panel selects the independent assessment team leader and determines if external experts will be used on the team. If an independent assessment is conducted in the same year as local assessments are conducted, it should be conducted after the local assessments are completed and evaluated by the Panel. This enables the independent assessment team to use the results of the internal assessments to help them in their assessment.

Individual offices may elect to conduct independent assessments at their discretion. These independent assessments may be used in lieu of an internal assessment if all of the objectives and criteria in this document are reviewed.

Reporting the Results of Federal Technical Capability Assessments

To facilitate the review of local Federal Technical Capability Assessments, the results of all assessments are documented in a consistent manner using the Federal Technical Capability Assessment Report format. The assessment report reflects the status of compliance according to the objectives and criteria listed in this document. The assessment report is approved by the assessment team leader. Local assessment reports are transmitted to the Office Manager. Local assessment reports are not released outside of the Panel without prior approval of the Office Manager. All other assessment reports are transmitted to the Chair of the Federal Technical Capability Panel by the assessment team leader. The format of Federal Technical Capability Assessment Reports is as follows:

1. Cover page - this should include the title of the report including the name of the office assessed, and the date of the report.

2. Executive Summary - this section should be limited to one page and provide a short overview of the team composition, dates of the assessment and methodology. A brief description of the results of the assessment should be provided, including strengths and weaknesses.
3. Introduction - this section should provide relevant background information, a description of the purpose of the report, and briefly describe the format of the report.
4. Scope and Methodology - this section should identify the Team Leader and Team Members, reference the use of the objectives and criteria, and briefly describe the methodology applied.
5. Results - this section should be subdivided into six sections that individually address each of the five objectives listed in this document, and the overall program. The report should describe the status of achieving the objective, including the identification of any strengths or weaknesses. Addressing each criterion for the objectives is not necessary, however, if any of the criteria are not achieved, a deficiency should be identified for the objective.
6. Attachments - the following attachments should be included with the report:
 - C The objectives and criteria
 - C Listing of Team Leader and Team Members, including a brief description of their background and experience
 - C List of personnel contacted and documents reviewed
 - C Any other pertinent information

The Panel reviews the results of all of the local assessment reports and writes a summary report to the Deputy Secretary indicating its overall assessment of the results of the reports, including recommendations as appropriate.

Independent assessment reports are also submitted to the Panel. The Panel reviews the results of the report and forwards it, along with recommendations, for any actions to the Deputy Secretary. Copies of the report and Panel recommendations are provided to all offices with representation on the Panel.

FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA

FTC-1 Executive Commitment and Line Management Ownership: Line management is actively involved in all aspects of technical employee recruitment, retention, development and deployment.

Criteria

- 1.1 Line managers are aware of the requirements and administrative flexibilities associated with recruiting, hiring and retaining high quality technical employees.
- 1.2 Senior line management supports the continuous technical development and improvement of employees.
- 1.3 Supporting organizations (personnel, training, contracts, finance, etc.) recognize line managers as customers and effectively support them in achieving and maintaining technical excellence.
- 1.4 The applicable Level One and/or field level Functions, Responsibilities and Authorities Manual (FRAM) clearly define federal line management responsibilities in the area of technical capability.
- 1.5 Achieving and maintaining technical competence is reflected in the goals and objectives of the organization and the position descriptions and performance evaluation plans of senior managers.
- 1.6 Technical Capability programs and processes are institutionalized through policy, orders, standards and procedures.
- 1.7 The results of previous Federal Technical Capability Assessments are used by management as a tool to improve the program.

FTC-2 Recruiting Technically Capable Personnel: An effective process is implemented to attract highly competent technical personnel to fill key positions in the Department.

Criteria

- 2.1 Excepted Service Authorities are considered for use as a tool to attract highly competent technical personnel to fill key safety positions.
- 2.2 Intern programs such as the Technical Leadership Development Programs are recognized as an effective method to attract technically competent personnel to the Department.

FTC - 3 Staffing and Deployment: Technical staffing plans are developed, maintained, and used as the basis for the recruitment, development and deployment of personnel to ensure that critical safety positions are filled with technically competent personnel.

Criteria

- 3.1 Technical staffing plans are developed and maintained to identify critical safety positions and other key technical positions within the organization.
- 3.2 Technical staffing plans form the basis for the recruitment, development and deployment of technical personnel in the organization.
- 3.3 Personnel in critical safety positions and other key technical positions possess the requisite education, training, experience and background for the position.
- 3.4 The Senior Technical Safety Manager Program is effectively implemented in the organization.

FTC-4 Development of Technically Capable Personnel: Programs and processes are effectively implemented to encourage the continuous improvement of technical personnel.

Criteria

- 4.1 The Technical Qualification Program (TQP) is effectively implemented. (Note: This program is evaluated using the TQP objectives and criteria)

- 4.2 Fellowship programs and other continuing education processes are effectively used to enhance the continuous improvement of technical personnel.
- 4.3 Personnel involvement with professional organizations, writing of professional papers and pursuit of professional certifications are encouraged.

FTC-5 Retaining Technically Capable Personnel: The Department of Energy is an organization where technically competent personnel are respected and want to work.

Criteria

- 5.1 Technical personnel are assigned positions and responsibilities that allow them to effectively use their education, training, experience and background in a fulfilling way.
- 5.2 Career path planning and succession planning are effectively used to facilitate the retention of technically capable personnel.
- 5.3 Technical performance is used as a basis for performance reviews, promotions, recognitions, rewards, etc.
- 5.4 An effective process is in place to preserve critical technical capabilities during a reduction in force (RIF).